

Challenging the Sea Monster: Mythical Re-enactment of the Struggle between Nature and Technology in the 19th and 20th Century Novel

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This dissertation explores the ancient mythological narrative of the struggle between man and sea monster, and the reasons for its re-emergence in the 19th and 20th-century novels: Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick, or The Whale*, Victor Hugo's *The Toilers of the Sea*, Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, and Dino Buzzati's *The Colomber*. This dissertation argues that the ancient myth is reinterpreted in a new context, thus providing its modern counterpart with a different purpose and outcome due to the conditions that fostered the development of these narratives. It examines how the altering of organic and mechanical imagery in depictions of the hero, vessel and monster in these novels reflects attitudes towards technology, and the mainly ambiguous thoughts about it. Finally, this dissertation attempts to discern why, in an age marked by rapidly progressing technology, and a predilection for encyclopaedic and scientific approaches, a need for mythological representations of reality arises.